

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE LA SALLE CITY COUNCIL
December 16, 2019**

A regular meeting of the La Salle City Council of La Salle, Illinois was held Monday, December 16, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. with James “Diz” Demes presiding as Mayor Pro-Tem in the absence of Mayor Jeff Grove with proper notice being duly and continuously posted.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present- Aldermen Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

Absent: Mayor Grove, Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon

A quorum was present.

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to appoint Alderman James “Diz” Demes as Mayor Pro-Tem in the absence of Mayor Grove for the duration of the meeting.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Crane to accept and place on file the minutes of the December 2, 2019 Regular City Council meeting. Each and every alderman has a copy.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Attorney McPhedran indicated for the record that in order to proceed with a council meeting a quorum must be present. A quorum of the City Council is five members made up of the Mayor and Alderman. Because we do have six aldermen present, we have a quorum and can proceed with votes being taken.

PETITIONS

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to allow Sandy Knott from Safe House Animal Rescue League to address the council regarding the Trap, Neuter and Release Program for feral cats.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Sandy Knott introduced herself and explained that Safe House is a 501c3 non-profit organization. They are a small, volunteer organization that is foster based. There are a small group of fosters and there are no paid employees. The organization operates on donations, there is no operating budget. The group provides services mainly to La Salle, Bureau and Putnam counties. The mission of the group is to reduce reproduction through their trap, neuter and release program. This is achieved through a monthly transport trip of feral cats. The fee is \$25 for the cat to be transported, spayed or neutered, vaccinated and ear tipped. Medical treatment is provided if needed. Once this process is complete, the cats are returned and released to their outside homes. The transport van used was purchased personally by the president of the organization.

The organization also offers rescue and adoption. They rescue kittens, both feral and socialized. They are taken to their shelter where they are treated for any illness, fully vetted and placed for adoption through PetSmart and internet connections. All are microchipped to Safe House. The group is not an open intake shelter. Another goal of the group is to offer education and assistance.

Ms. Knott stated that they have had 1,064 intakes since 2016. 918 of those intakes were adopted with only 34 loss of lives or intakes that required euthanasia. The three-year average for placement was 88% with a loss rate of 4%.

As far as La Salle, she stated that residents have been transporting community cats quietly in La Salle through their organization. The group has focused over the past year and a half on certain problem areas which resulted in 15-20 cats being vetted around the Monari's 101 area. Because of the generosity of a resident who provided funding, no kittens were born in the area this year. In addition, the group has reduced reproduction and rescued kittens in the area near the Veteran's Home, near a church on the east end of town and on Argyle Street. Currently, the focus is on the Canal Street area. Each month, space is reserved for cats to be transported through concerned residents. Safe House at this time subsidizes the cost. Since May, 15 kittens and other sociable cats have been taken from a specific area on Canal Street. All feral cats are returned once vaccinated and healthy and living a life without the ability to reproduce. She added that cats who have been vetted lose unwanted behaviors such as spraying, fighting and screaming. Cats who are fed and healthy do not typically wander far from their feeding locations and feral cats do not approach humans.

Ms. Knott stated that at the last council meeting concerns were expressed regarding cat colonies within the City. There is concern that community cats could be placed in an open intake shelter and then euthanized. She continued by saying that trapping and removing the cats has proven to be unsuccessful and inhumane as feral cats are not adoptable. The removal of a colony cat has been proven to cause the vacuum effect, as the removal allows other cats to come into the area. She added that controlling reproduction is the best method to control cat colonies.

Each alderman was given a handout containing further information about the services of the organization. She continued by saying that with the help of responsible citizens, assistance from the City, cats can be trapped, spayed or neutered and returned to their outside homes. These responsible citizens then feed and monitor the colony and arrange for spay/neuter services should any new cat arrive to the colony. If kittens are born, a plan for rescue is developed.

Ms. Knott referenced the City of Flanagan who is utilizing a TNR program successfully and the Atlanta Boardwalk program where no kittens have been born in ten years. She also pointed out the City of Rochelle who, in October of 2019, offered traps to their residents advising the trapped cats would be euthanized. This unsuccessful project resulted in national attention.

Ms. Knott stated that the group was set to transport 30 cats for vetting in the morning. This is actually the second trip this month as 30 cats were transported last week as well. There were Canal Street cats in the first transport and there will be three Canal Street cats on the transport scheduled for the morning.

She stated that those in attendance this evening are there to ask the City council to allow them to continue the work they are doing with TNR without interference. They promised to quietly

continue the work with updates and successful stories. She added that no harm will come of this as the cats are already in the city. She ended by stating that there will always be community cats, as they exist everywhere. They are not native to our land and we have created their issues. It is our choice to control them or let them be uncontrolled. The methods used over the past 20 years in our area have not been successful. The Safe House methods are proven effective. She stated that in a year if the City is not pleased with the progress being made by the responsible residents who work with Safe House, then other steps can be revisited. She thanked the council for allowing her to speak.

Residents can contact Safe House Animal Rescue through their website (www.safehousepets.org) or the group's Facebook page. An application is available for residents to fill out if services are needed. There are also tips for successfully trapping feral cats on the webpage.

Alderman Bacidore stated that he had a problem with a neighbor's cats that were supposedly spayed or neutered, but they were still spraying, which creates an odor. Ms. Knott said she understood his concerns but was not aware of the facts in this particular situation. She continued by stating that socialized cats should never be left loose. Colony cats will return to their colony. As long as reproduction is reduced the colony will eventually be reduced. With TNR, there is no place to house a feral cat. She added that there is no easy solution to this problem and many cities have this problem. Brief discussion followed about how our current ordinances would apply to feral cats, as currently our ordinance does not allow cats or dogs to run loose. Attorney McPhedran recapped Ms. Knott's comments by stating that in essence what she is saying is that she believes this program can help control and reduce the number of cats roaming at large, over time, in a humane manner. Ms. Knott said that was exactly correct.

Mayor Pro-Tem Demes asked how to tell the difference between a feral cat and a socialized cat. Ms. Knott stated that you can tell by their behavior.

Moved by Alderman and seconded by Alderman to grant the requests for 2020 Raffle Licenses to the La Salle Peru Township High School Foundation for Educational Enrichment, John Ebener on behalf of Ninth Street Pub and Sharon Sadnick on behalf of Borderline DNS, LLC., Trinity Catholic Academy and the Illinois Valley Alzheimer's Group. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane
NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to grant the request for a 2020 Raffle License from the Better Fishing Association. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Reynolds Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: Alderman Bacidore, Alderman Lavieri

Motion Carried 4-0-2

Mayor Pro-Tem Demes stated that the following petitions simply begin the process by referring the requests to the appropriate boards. Formal publication of the meeting date and time will be made at a later date where the public will have an opportunity to be heard on the matters.

Attorney McPhedran stated that as he understands it the potential lease is contingent upon the petitioner obtaining a license from the State and also the Special Use Permit from the City. He

also confirmed with the petitioner Andrew Martinez who was present at the meeting, that there is now a signed lease in place and that he has gained the consent from both the landlord, Adam Sondgeroth, and the building owner Frank Fouts. Mr. Martinez indicated that the information was correct. Attorney McPhedran stated that the public will be informed as to when the joint hearing with the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals is scheduled in order for them to have an opportunity to weigh in on the matter.

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to refer the request of Andrew Martinez, holder of an option to lease the premises, which request is for a Special Use Permit to potentially operate a Recreational Cannabis Dispensary at 853 First Street, presently zoned C-3, within the City of La Salle, Illinois, which request is also conditioned and contingent upon the issuance of a license by the State of Illinois, to operate a Recreational Cannabis Dispensary, which request is also consented to by Adam Sondgeroth, contract purchaser of the subject premises and consented to by Frank Fouts, record owner of the subject premises to the Planning Commission. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to refer the request from Andrew Martinez, holder of an option to lease the premises, for the variance being requested to include, but not necessarily limited to, the zoning ordinance to allow operation of a Recreational Cannabis Dispensary at 853 First Street, which premises are presently zoned C-3 within the City of La Salle, with the variance being requested to be from the requirement to be located no less than 250 feet from a building being used as a residence to 133 feet from a building being used as a residence also conditioned and contingent upon the issuance of a license to operate a recreational Cannabis Dispensary by the State of Illinois, which request is consented to by Adam Sondgeroth contract purchaser of the premises and consented to by Frank Fouts who is the record owner of the premises to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to grant the request of Dollar General for a sign permit to install a 6' x 16' illuminated, dual faced, ground sign with an overall height of 21' and two 3'9" x 26' illuminated wall signs at premises located at 2345 St. Vincent Avenue. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS

Moved by Alderman Bacidore and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to accept and place on file the Building Inspector's Report for November 2019 showing total fees collected of \$5,624.66 with total value of construction of \$1,102,735. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to accept and place on file the Treasurer's Report for October 2019 showing cash balances in the La Salle State Bank of \$8,628,659.81 and in Hometown National Bank of \$3,205,990.87. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Reynolds to accept and place on file the Treasurer's Report for November 2019 showing cash balances in the La Salle State Bank of \$7,859,677.77 and in Hometown National Bank of \$3,673,684.55. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

COMMUNICATIONS

Clerk Brown read a thank you from Luke Tomsha from the Perfectly Flawed Foundation.

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to accept and place on file the Illinois Department of Revenue showing sales tax collected for September 2019 of \$73,638.75 and Home Rule Sales Tax of \$64,721.28 for a total of \$138,360.03. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Pro-Tem Demes thanked all who participated in and volunteered for the Miracle on First event this past weekend. He thanked LPAC, the Police and Fire Departments and all who volunteered. He announced that the \$500 50/50 winner was Jen and Bob Barnes. Mayor Pro-Tem Demes stated that it takes many volunteers to make these events successful and stated that the City can always use more volunteers. Alderman Reynolds said the Breakfast with Santa went very well and bingo at the Grove Center had a great crowd. Mayor Pro-Tem Demes thanked Katherine Koyak and Lynda Kasik for spearheading the bingo and the AX Church for their participation in the day's events.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Crane to accept and place on file

Ordinance 2863: An Ordinance Authorizing Renewal of Lease Involving Small Portion of Premises in Connection with Civic Water Tower at 341 North 30th Road within the City of La Salle. Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

Ordinance 2863: An Ordinance Authorizing Renewal of Lease Involving Small Portion of Premises in Connection with Civic Water Tower at 341 North 30th Road within the City of La Salle.

COMMENTS

Sherry Mayszak, resident of Peru, stated that she has trapped five or six cats over the last two years and they have been returned to her house by Safe House. She explained that if a feral cat has been trapped and fixed, a person can determine this as the left ear will be tipped. This is one way to identify these cats. She stated she is not affiliated with Safe House but knows the good things they have done for her neighborhood and suggested that the City Council consider making a donation to the organization. Mayor Pro-Tem Demes asked the City Clerk to add the request to the next agenda.

Mary Ellen Renz stated that she grew up in La Salle but has been away for 27 years. She stated that when she left it was all about Peru. She stated that upon her recent return to the area she has never been so proud to see her hometown. She complimented the beautiful downtown, steps the City has taken to clean up some areas and the many events the City has brought in. She said the City is moving in the right direction. She commended the council and all who have been involved in making this happen. Mayor Pro-Tem Demes stated that it has been the work of a lot of people over the years and thanked Ms. Renz for her comments.

Tom Henson of WLPO asked when the hearings with the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding the potential Special Use Permit and variance are scheduled for. Attorney McPhedran stated that they have not been scheduled at this time, but the public and the press will be notified when a date is set.

Lorie Feigel, resident of Paw Paw, stated that she began a trap and return program in her town. She has done this now for three years and they are now at 86% trap, neuter and return. She said if you do not see the ear tip and you know it is not a neighbor's pet, it is best to call an organization like Safe House to make a plan for the cat. Without doing that, it will be a non-stop cycle as more kittens will be born. Mayor Pro-Tem Demes asked if it was true that you should not feed a feral cat. She said you can feed them if you plan to take care of them by having them spayed or neutered.

Alderman Reynolds thanked all the volunteers of Safe House for the work they are doing with the cats.

City Clerk Brown reminded the public that City Hall will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Alderman Jeppson thanked Sandy Knott for providing the council with information regarding the services of Safe House. Alderman Lavieri thanked the LBA for sponsoring the Christkindlmarket.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Moved by Alderman Ptak and seconded by Alderman Lavieri to accept, pay and place on file bills with Total Submitted totaling \$856,009.00 (Total Payroll \$183,888.06, Bills to be Paid \$289,521.39, Total Bills Paid \$289,521.39). Each and every alderman has a copy.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Alderman Demes, Bacidore, Reynolds, Lavieri, Jeppson, Crane

NAY: None Absent: Alderman Ptak, Alderman Herndon Abstain: None

Motion Carried 6-0

Moved by Alderman Reynolds and seconded by Alderman Crane to adjourn the meeting.
Voice vote, all ayes. Motion is carried.

ADJOURNED 7:17 p.m.

Carrie Brown

Carrie Brown, City Clerk